

## The SQ3R Method of Reading

This strategy is especially useful for dense textbook reading. The SQ3R method increases your ability to concentrate on the material, enhances your understanding of the material, and improves your chances of remembering what you read.

Follow the steps below:

1. **Survey:** Take five minutes to skim over the entire chapter. Read over all of the headings, and read the summary chapter (if it exists). Look at graphs, pictures, diagrams. This preview will orient you to the main focus of the chapter. Think of the survey step as creating a set of directions: it helps you get to your destination faster and easier.
2. **Question:** Create questions out of the headings. For example, if the heading in a chapter is “The SQ3R System of Reading”, then you can convert it into a question by asking “*What is the SQ3R System of Reading?*” Turning headings into questions is essential to increasing your concentration *and* to improving your ability to select main ideas. Remember: when you read with a purpose (i.e. to answer a question) you get more out of the reading. You might want to write these questions down on a separate sheet of paper, leaving space between each question for the answers.
3. **Read:** Now that you have formulated a question for each heading, begin to read for the answers. Mark your textbook as you encounter important information by underlining key words/ideas. Use an asterisk, question mark or exclamation point to indicate an important definition, a confusion point, something you think might be on an exam, etc. Read only as far as the first section, and then write out a summarized version of the answer underneath your question. Then move on to the next step.
4. **Recite:** Having read the first section, look away from your notes and try to answer the first question. Use your own words, and cite an example. If you can’t answer the question, briefly look over the notes you took and try again. Once you are able to recite your answer, repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 for the rest of the chapter. Make sure to take scheduled breaks if the chapter is extra long or difficult.
5. **Review:** When you have completed the chapter, look over your notes to get a sense of the overall coherence of the chapter. Try to recall the main points of the chapter. Try to understand how the chapter relates to the material you are studying in class, and how it relates to the last chapter you read.

### Why is SQ3R so successful?

The system works because it forces you to pass over the information multiple times in one reading session. This activity helps move information from short term into long term memory. That means that if you use a “multiple pass system” now, you won’t have to cram all the material into your brain the night before an exam. So although this system seems like a lot of extra work, it actually isn’t. It saves you time and frustration and gives you the confidence that you need to participate in class.

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